1350

Alice Street
Interviewed by Celine Passage
Spring, 1996
For Apple Industry & Festival Exhibit- West County Museum

AS: It was apples and pears.

CP: And what year was that?

AS: Let's see I was born in 1910 and they came out the year before, in 1909.

CP: And your father's name was?

AS: Well his real name, Francis William (Orchard) but he called himself Frank. After he got out here and got in business he was Frank Orchard. He was born in Leeds, England. then he moved out, he came out as a young man. He was different places, down in Florida all over different places working as a young man trying to make a living. Then he came up to Iowa and that's where he stayed and met my mother. They married and lived back there all those years. They had two children, I had my sister and my brother born there. Then they moved out here and I was born. So I say ok. I say I have a bit of Iowa in me as well as California.

CP: And when it was a name like Orchard you couldn't miss.

AS: You know that's funny cause my name was Orchard and I married a Baker, Harold Baker. Lived right up here on this house on the hill and I lost him. Then I married a Street. People keep teasing me "When are you going to marry an Avenue?" I says forget it. I had two wonderful husbands I will never try it again.

CP: What was his first name? Street?

AS: Cornelius J. Street. C.J. He lived right over here on the hill about ten corners from me. I had never met him. I knew the family lived there but I was over here busy. But I had to have water from down near the spring. 1500 ft. of pipeline and they had to dig the trench so the man that was doing work for me he brought him along with him to help dig the ditch. Well that was fine, two guys was better than one. So they did. My mother was staying with me then. She was a widow, my dad had passed away some time ago. I was busy and had my youngster. So she came here to help me. Do housework and cook and take care of the boy. One day my mother says to me why don't you have them come in and have lunch with us. They did that back in Iowa, They always fed the help. Out here they don't. You don't feed the help here. The girl I have to clean for me I always give her lunch. I go get here. She lives in one of the houses up there by Darolyn. (Hurst's Twin Hills ranch/Pleasant Hill Road) You know where she is? packing house. Well that's where the cabin is in the back, she lives there. So I get her on Saturday morning. Not today. She works for Darolyn in the bakery so the only time I can get her is on Saturday.

CP: I was just thinking Darolyn is the other daughter. Then he (Darrell Hurst) has a blond daughter.

AS: He has five children of his own. And they adopted eight.

CP: I didn't know that. I'm a newcomer. Well I've been here ten years. And belonged to the Historical Society about 4 years into my stay here and I'm learning a lot.

AS: I have a photo of all of them together. They gave it to us at Christmas. All the little babies. Here were these children. Their mothers were no good, kids were in the gutter. What do you do? That was laid onto their hands. They adopted those. And they have all turned out...well there's three of them. they've never been in jail. But they been ...heartsick....

CP: Their father is a hard act to follow. He's a live wire.

AS: Oh yes, you didn't meet margie. She's just as sweet as she can be. i love both of them. Since I've been away. I've been alone. My husband died in 1976. We knew them, we watched them grow. I've been to every one ofthe kids weddings. And the funerals. They adopted me and I adopted them.

CP: What school did you finish at?

AS: I went to Analy for two years and then I went to Sweet's business college. That was on Ross Street. That's not there anymore. And I graduated in 6 months. I took the course for bookkeeping. My neighbor that lived in Forestville was one of my teachers. His name was Close. I came out and I went to work. I didn't like it. I was inside. I was used to being outside running around with my Dad and the horses and what not. Well I thought after I got married I'm not going to go out I'm going to stay here and work in the field with you. He said are you sure? Yes!

CP: What a difference was Mrs. Germone. All she wanted was reading.

AS: A lot of the women didn't here. Just like hauling apples. I was the first one that started hauling apples to town to the packing house to the dryer. Pretty soon another one would start and another would start. So there got to be several women that were started hauling apples. Well I did it because my husband could stay here and keep picking apples.

CP: So you were driving. That's what you call hauling?

AS: I drove the truck.

CP: And you had the lift and everything.

AS: Oh no we picked in boxes. We had to pick them up to get them up there. We only had 15 acres. You can't have all that equipment. They didn't have much in

those days anyway. But we never did have one. We always. When we first started out we picked in gunny sacks off the ground.

CP: I picked. I like to pick. We had to leave the orchard alone. My husband was in the construction business. In the years he wanted to keep busy, we did the crops for 3 years. Then he started remodelling the house. That was all his Sundays and Mondays and then he went back. He will get back to it we have only 7 acres.

AS: Then I just worked in the field. I picked apples, I picked up apples. I drove tractor for spraying. i drove tractor for cultivating. He would be busy doing other things I couldn't do so I would do the discing. Why not? I could drive a tractor just as good as he could maybe better. I never drove one out there because we had horses out home.

CP: And you had two kids?

AS: Yes, now this is by my first husband, Mr. Baker. When the babies came, that was fine. And as soon as I could I took them out in the field with me. I put them in a lug box. Blankets around. and we'd go out to work.

CP: And they'd probably love it.

AS: Why sure there were lots of things going around. We lost him after he was a little over two years. Was something they never did figure out why. He just went unconscious one night. We took him to the hospital. In the meantime, we had the other boy, Charles. We decided we didn't think we'd have more children. It was fine by me. You don't know what's ahead of you.

CP: Sometimes you're decision. You grow tree and plants and sometimes you select.

AS: Charles was in the sixth grade, he went to the Oak Grove School, there was a school right at the end of Baker Lane at one time. When he was first in school. It was like his Dad they had to go clear over here to Pleasant Hill school. You know where the cemetery is. That was the school. Now its a Christian School. i would take him over in the morning and get him. Cause he couldn't walk clear over there and back and forth. Later they built this school, the Gold Ridge School. So then I got him transferred. We really belonged over there where the line was. In the sixth grade he was a student that really worked to keep his grades up. He wanted to be up there. He was taxing his brain too much. We didn't know what was the matter. Then he started having... we found out he was having seizures. We spent a fortune going to the doctors here in Sebastopol and doctors in Santa Rosa. Feed him sugar, feed him that, feed him this. That wasn't helping a thing. They didn't know what it was. One evening I happened to be reading one of my magazines and I was reading it and I said that sounds like Charles. I gave it to my husband, I said C.J. look at this. I said I'm going to write to them. I'll scribble it first and you read it. It went to the American School of something. We sent it. They sent us back the nicest letter and recommended we

go to San Francisco to the UC Hospital and take him there. We called down there and made an appointment and went down. Wasn't very long they knew what he had. He had epilepsy. He was there from June til Oct. Then they operated. They gave him everything to find out where it was located see. And they would put dye.

CP: What year was that?

AS: 1945. (CP: Right after the war) We were down there. How I remember so much the boys were all back from the service and my husband never had a wrist watch. We'd be down in the city and take off for awhile and go downtown. He was looking in the windows and said "look at that watch" Let's go see what they want for it. So we went in. He talked. It belonged to one of the captains he turned it in to get the money for it and he came back. So it was $45. He bought it and it's still running. Charles knew CJ as his Dad. He didn't remember his Dad.He was small when I married CJ.

CP: How old is Charles now.?

AS: Well he's gone. He died in 1985. He was 53 years old. I had him in there I had him in the front room. He had cancer.

CP: Did he enjoy his life in between?

AS: Oh sure, he was with us all the time. We took him travelling with us. If he didn't want to go we took him to Bodega Bay and he stayed with friends and went fishing. He had a wonderful life. He had his horse. The doctor told us he will not be a normal child. You have to treat him as good as you can. There are going to be a lot of things he'll never be able to do. He'll never be able to drive a car. He didn't want to anyway. So we got him a horse. We knew somebody that had one you could trust. He wanted to sell it. So we bought it. That horse was the same age as Charles. He knew there was something wrong with Charles. How we found that out we were spraying down below here. CJ had put the saddle on the horse for him before we went out to spray. I was watching him, He was coming down the trail. He got down below and all of a sudden I didn't see him on the horse. But the horse was standing still. I got off the tractor and went back to where they were spraying. I said I'm going to go and see what's happened. I don't see Charles and the horse has been standing there too long. And he was laying there right in front of her head and the horse never moved. He knew there was something wrong. We never worried when he went riding. He would stand. I came back up and we finished that tank and Charles was able to hang onto the horn and I brought Charles into the house and he stayed here until he was ready to get up and go again. So that's the way we had to do things.

CP: Did he ever work in the field.

AS: Oh yes, but he never drove the tractor. But he was out there with us a lot.

CP: The whole family worked. Tell me about the Coop.

AS: Did Darrell tell you about that.? Was he talking about Vacudry. The only thing we ever belonged to. There were 26 of us growers. We built Pleasant Hill..what was the name of our dryer, I forget myself. We had a dryer near Sebastopol as you're into Sebastopol down from here. Where the Shell station is south of town, where you wash your car. Mexican right across. Down that lane is where we built our dryer. We had it built. When it was ready to go. Wives and husbands went there and worked in it.

CP: There's a street there, Hutchins.

AS: That's the other side. i can't remember the name of that.

CP: There's Palm Drive.

AS; You're coming south more now. Right across from that Shell station. Where the new place they've taken over.

CP: Antique Mall.

AS: yes, down that road there (CP: Palm Drive)

AS: Pleasant Hill Dryer. What's the matter with me. They finally was able to get a crew in there to work. In 1945 they struck. Not '45 , 1950-55 the people struck. They wanted more money. So they quit. The crew - farmers had to go back to work.

CP: What kind of dryer was it, only for apples? Did they slice them ? What fuel did they use to dry them?

AS: It had a tray, burned sulfur. We peeled, it went into a bin. Sliced them. Gas I guess. I wasn't into that. They had their business and I had mine here. But it was our dryer sure. We'd get a load and take it down there. But when we got so many apples we might leave the truck there all night.

CP: Who bought the apples from you?

AS: We took them to Pleasant Hill Dryer and people would buy them. They were all ready to go. Then they struck. I would work there. My husband wouldn't let me work at the dryer. They were doing a lot of dirty work. Putting sugar in the gas tank, letting air out of your tires. When they struck. He let me go down during the day but not at night. So I went to El Molino Dryer. I knew the people who run it. The Rio's (?) so I went out there.

CP: What street was that on?

AS: Forestville. on the road going to Occidental Road.

CP: Is it still there?

AS: No. I worked til we were through there then I went to Green Valley, Graton and I worked there til that one closed up. I was helping them. I was a farmer's wife and I knew what these guys had to do. They had to make a little money if they could. Other wives would come a day or two. But would say this is too much work.

CP: What about the waxing of apples.

AS: This is waxing.

CP: You never did that?

AS: No. We picked them and took them in. We never took any apples to Darrell. That was all done later on.This waxing deal. We sold in '61. Mr. Street had a bad hip and at that time I was getting around to be 50 and the doctor says Alice you're going to have to stop jumping off and on a tractor and off and on a truck. I said why, I'm fine. "But you're coming to a time when things are going to be changing." I says what do you mean changing. I knew but I was..my doctor was a love. We thought. Mr. Street wasn't too ready to sell. I couldn't figure out why that hip was killing him. So finally I nailed him down. Why don't you want to sell. Well you came here as a bride and this was yours this was never mine. I said that has nothing to do with it. I'm ready to sell. So we finally sold. But when he finally gave in to have his hip. it was bone rubbing on bone. No wonder he was in pain.

CP: and they were able to fix it.?

AS: Beautiful he could walk without pain. That was done in Feb. and in Oct. I lost him he had cancer. He didn't die with cancer. We were in the doctor's office. He didn't feel good that morning. We were sitting there talking. My brother and Charles were sitting in the back. He said will you take me to the barbershop, this was on a Friday, will you take me to the barbershop Monday. I couldn't even answer and he was gone. Just like that. That's the way he wanted to go and he got his wish.

CP: How old was he?

AS: Let's see he would have been ..... I had a thing on Darrell and gave him a medal for an apple deal. I thought I had it in my bible. I wonder what I did with it. OK, when did Corney die. Darrell was over the other day and we were talking. He died in SR Oct. 8, 1976. He was 77. Native So. Dak. Member Graton Farm Bureau Cooperative Cannery, K of Pythis, Christian Life...Church.
He had a full life. I grabbed him and held him and hollered at Charlie. There wasn't a doctor of nurse around. I said Charlie get the doctor. He got a hold of three doctors. I said I want to tell you something. I'm not hard boiled. I love that man and I love him dearly but I do not want to put any life support on him. Not one thing. Let him go. They said he is gone. .....I want him to go peacefully.

CP: It's so hard for people to do that. AS: I know it is but I've had to go through so many deaths already and been with em. My first husband. He died in a sanitarium by St. Helena. He didn't die here.

CP: Did you ever meet Viola Ditwell?

AS: Yes, she was a nurse up there. Oh not a nurse, but a pink lady. She was wonderful.

CP: When she told me her life. What she did. She put on her exercise tape and did the hula. She said you can't imagine what the hula does to you. And she was in her 90's. Telling me all these stories. etc.

AS: My sister and her were very close.

CP: That was her work. Her husband was sick. She said he's better off when he's alone. She would go out and help other people. He wasn't supposed to work and that was the hardest part. She has two daughters. Anyway. There are people who are inspirations.

(discussion of nursing homes and aging)

Back to the apple business:

AS: I used to ride the street car from Forestville to Santa Rosa.

CP: (misc. conversation)

AS: Did you see the piece in the paper on Joe Furusho.?

CP: Yes they are going to have seven installments....

discussion follows on:

Building permits. Germone's.

100 year old trees in Alice Street's orchard.

CP: Did you ever meet Stuart Malm. He's in his 60's.

AS: Cudge Malm. He married a Jewell.

CP: Twins. They're flyers. Stuart recalls going to the depot too. We'd like to know if anyone remembers, there was this logo and we cannot find what color it was painted.

AS: No I can't tell you what color it was. You don't pay attention. I wonder who would be good at that. Have you tried Trigeiro?

etc.

CP: You probably remember the Knight's.

AS: Kenneth Knight. He married a Hutton girl. But he's gone.

CP: The King's they lived to live on Germone Rd.

AS: The King I knew lived up here. Charles King?

CP: What do you know about the second coop. Darrell Hurst said he started the coop because.... Vacu dry

discussion on Hurst's - health - etc.

miscellaneous

Side 2

AS: Poor dear he was in tears. I said don't be in tears, I'm happy today. But you could have been dead yesterday too. I said yes I could have but I would have died happy, I'd have been in my orchard. He said, that's no way to go. I said Gerald I know I did something very foolish. I was going right down the roadway and my foot slipped and went off. And went off.

CP: And where you had to bring your second husband in to dig the trench.

AS: Oh yeah, for the water trench. This was just a big hole, from gophers. I didn't know it was there. But I sure found out about it in a hurry. And the Mexicans the next day when they come to work. "How's our pig today."? Well that's what pigs do they wallow in mud. It wasn't funny then but I can laugh now. But I sure wasn't laughing then.

CP: How many years ago was that?

AS: 3 or 4 years ago. See I haven't been well. That was my trouble, I couldn't get up. If I had been well I could have rolled over and got up. But I couldn't get up. Just like today, I'm not as well as I look. But I don't put on. In the mornings I'm fine. I had a slight stroke. They finally figured that's what I had. They don't know for sure. The doctors don't know and I don't know either. I was fine. Showered and dressed to go to town. I went in the bathroom before I left and the next thing I found out..I had the tub taken out and made the shower in their. I knew he was going to have that hip done well he'd have to hop in there. Well what's he gonna do if he didn't have a place to hop. So that's come I had it taken out. So when I finally come out of this i was getting right at the edge by the door by the shower. So there I was. Now here you have a ledge, how are you

going to get over that. You got nothing to hang on to. Well I'm gonna have to see if I can hop myself and I kept hopping. Oh..I was fine. Finally I got over. My poor butt but that was all right it's pretty big anyhow. So then I thought well it's about time for Ted to come with the paper. So if I can get out on the porch, hippity hop out there someway so he doesn't hear so I can wave to him he would see me and come in. After awhile there he come. Well we keep a key here and he came in. He says "Auntie, what's the matter?" I don't know Ted but you have Irma come and call 911. You cannot pick me up either one of you so call 911 and I will go to the hospital. So she came over and she called. They took me over. Dr. Goolish (sp?) was my orthopedic doctor. He put me in a new kneecap on me. I never had no trouble, never had a pain. That was done in '91. Just wonderful. And I heard his voice when I was arriving "he said "you take good care of that girl" I don't want you to move her too fast, don't let her move, keep her steady. I don't her to come in here and be broke to pieces. He found out about it. I wasn't his patient he was an orthopedic doctor but he was my friend. Bless his heart. So I got in there they put me to bed and the next thing I knew a day or two I was in the convalescent hospital.

CP: That's when you swore that's ....

AS: I said my golly what am I doing here. Well of course Darrell's family and the Miller's down here on Snow Road very dear friends of mine. Everybody was just coming. Alice get out of here. You don't belong in here. But then there'd be time I didn't know I'd have a place. I didn't know I had a home.

CP: They got you so drugged.

AS: Hands full of pills and I'd say what are these. they'd say it doesn't make any difference, take them. Well I would take them. I didn't know how long I'd been there. I didn't ask my niece. She would bring the washing. So I thought one morning I said to the girl who came and helped me get dressed I'm getting out of here today. "Where are you going?" I'll go out here and sleep in the gutter. I won't sleep in here another night. "You can't" I said yes I can. "Nooooo" Well she called my doctor and he came. "What do I hear about you?" Well what did you hear? "You said you were going to go out there and sleep in the gutter" I said I can't take it in here any long with these people. I was coming out of it and they were bothering me. So I argued with my doctor and I looked up and I saw Graham and Dorothy Miller these people off Snow Rd. That had been wanting me to come and stay with them and see if they could bring me out of it. I'm going home with them. "He says no they can't take care of you" Dorothy says we can and so did Graham and she was in my room packing my stuff and I was gone.

CP: What a lucky break!

AS: I was with them for three months before I was ready to come back up here. But they talked to me about my place and eventually they brought me up here so I could see my place but I didn't mean too much to me. She cooked just like she did for her family, her husband, her son and herself. In a week's time I had

gained a pound. I was losing weight in there cause I wasn't eating. All that stuff. If it hadn't been for them, I wouldn't be here today. And my friends all knew it.

CP: And that was several years ago.

AS: I tell you it was rough.

CP: Friends are really what you can depend on. Family ...

AS: Yes they are. my niece... now I've had things done for me. she never would come near. I had both of my eyes done she never came to see if she could help me. I had to put drops in every hour on the hour. And try to do a little cooking for myself.

CP: It's a different set of values. When you get friends you choose them. And you respect your feeling. When you grow up with family its entirely different.

AS: When it was all over with I think back. Poor Dorothy i had to get her up out of bed to take me to the bathroom it was right across the hall from where I was sleeping. But I had to wake her up everytime. I couldn't go by myself. No way could I walk there.

CP: But you retrained yourself. Three months.

AS: But I got through it. i helped as much as I could then I got shingles. After I got well enough then we went on a trip to Oregon. To Union Creek. I said I'm not able to walk through the woods to the restroom. Do they have a cabin there. I said call them and I'll pay for it. So we got one with two bedrooms and we went up there. And the next morning I woke up and here was a rash. and I thought we'd been around places. I didn't say anything to them. The next morning it was a bit further. Third morning, I said to Dorothy: What is this? "Did you have chicken pox?" I said yeah when I was a kid. Then you got shingles. She was a secretary in the hospital. an..

continued